

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 10048 01 OF 02 011516Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----020444 011519Z /40
O 011428Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9661
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 10048

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS CHEROKEE

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV MILI IS EG US
SUBJ: WEIZMAN'S LETTER TO GAMASY AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR
MEETING

REF.: TEL AVIV 9944

1. EZER WEIZMAN ASKED ME TO MEET WITH HIM LAST NIGHT, NOVEMBER 30, TO DISCUSS HIS FORTHCOMING MEETING WITH GAMASY. HE SENT OVER TO ME THIS MORNING A LETTER TO GAMASY WHICH HE ASKED ME TO TRANSMIT THROUGH AMBASSADOR EILTS. (TEXT OF LETTER IS FOUND AT END OF THIS MESSAGE. SIGNED ORIGINAL WILL BE POUCHED TO AMBASSADOR EILTS FOR DELIVERY.)

2. AFTER HAVING THOUGHT FURTHER ABOUT THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS TRAVEL TO EGYPT SUGGESTED BY SADAT, WEIZMAN WOULD NOW LIKE TO PROPOSE AN ALTERNATIVE. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE IT IS APPROPRIATE OR INDEED WISE FOR HIM AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE TO TRY TO FLY ON A COMMERCIAL AIRLINE UNDER AN ASSUMED NAME FROM SOME POINT NEARBY. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE HE IS PARTICULARLY EASY TO DISGUISE IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND IS SENSITIVE TO THE FACT THAT ANY COMMERCIAL AIRLINER TRAVELLING IN THIS AREA AT PRESENT COMES UNDER
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SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 10048 01 OF 02 011516Z

A CERTAIN RISK OF HIJACKING. NEITHER HE NOR BEGIN NOW BELIEVE THIS IS A GOOD WAY FOR HIM TO COME TO THE MEETING.

3. WEIZMAN'S GREATLY PREFERRED MODE OF TRAVEL WOULD BE BY A US AIR FORCE PLANE WHICH COULD PICK HIM UP PERHAPS AT NIGHT HERE AT BEN GURION AIRPORT AND FLY HIM DIRECTLY TO CAIRO. SINCE THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF

AIR FORCE PLANES IS FAIRLY COMMON AT BOTH AIRPORTS, THIS WOULD NOT ATTRACT ATTENTION AND WOULD AVOID RISKS BOTH OF UNWANTED PUBLICITY AND POSSIBLE HIJACKING. AS A MUCH LESS DESIRABLE ALTERNATIVE, HE COULD START FROM THE SINAI FIELD MISSION AND TRAVEL OVERLAND BY ONE OF THE US VEHICLES WHICH FREQUENTLY GOES FROM SFM TO CAIRO. THIS IS CONSIDERABLY MORE TIME-CONSUMING, ALSO HAS MORE RISK OF BECOMING KNOWN TO A WIDE GROUP, AND SEEMS TO HIM (AND TO ME) FAR LESS DESIRABLE. (WEIZMAN ASSUMES THAT THE EGYPTIANS WOULD NOT WISH HIM TO COME IN AN ISRAELI AIRCRAFT AT THIS STAGE OF THE DIALOGUE AND SO DID NOT SUGGEST THAT AS A FURTHER OPTION.)

4. THE OTHER QUESTION HE RAISED RELATES TO COMPANIONS. WEIZMAN IS NOT AT ALL INTERESTED IN PROTOCOL OR HEAD-ING A "DELEGATION" IN ORDER TO MAKE ANY SPLASH. BUT HE IS INTERESTED IN MAKING THE TALKS AS FRUITFUL AND AS MILITARILY SOUND AS POSSIBLE, ASSUMING THIS IS ALSO GAMASY'S DESIRE. HE WOULD LIKE, THEREFORE, TO BRING WITH HIM HIS MILITARY SECRETARY, LT COL ILAN TEHILA; THE ISRAELI COMMANDER OF THE SOUTHERN REGION, GENERAL SHAFIR; AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, PROBABLY DIRECTOR OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE GENERAL GAZIT; A SIGNALS OFFICER PURELY AS A TECHNICAL ADVISOR; AND ONE OR TWO PERSONAL SECURITY OFFICERS. HE WOULD ALSO BE HAPPY TO BRING HIS AIR FORCE COMMANDER IF GENERAL GAMASY THOUGHT THAT WOULD
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 10048 01 OF 02 011516Z

BE HELPFUL IN THE DISCUSSIONS. IF FOR SOME REASON THIS IS TOO LARGE A GROUP, HE THINKS THAT AS AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM HE NEEDS HIS MILITARY SECRETARY, GENERAL SHAFIR AND THE PERSONAL SECURITY OFFICERS.

5. WEIZMAN MADE CLEAR THAT NONE OF THIS WAS BEING PUT FORWARD AS A CONDITION TO HIS COMING. IF IT IS ESSEN-TIAL, HE WILL COME ALONE. BUT HE IS CONVINCED THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE THESE FEW ASSOCIATES WITH HIM TO MAKE THE MEETINGS MILITARILY MOST PRODUCTIVE. HE HOPES VERY MUCH THAT GAMASY WILL AGREE.

6. WEIZMAN ALSO WANTED US TO PASS ON TO GAMASY THE FACT THAT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY HE MIGHT HAVE TO DELAY HIS TRAVEL THREE OR FOUR DAYS BEYOND DECEMBER 20 FOR PURELY MEDICAL REASONS. AT THIS MOMENT HIS DOCTORS THINK HE WILL BE READY TO TRAVEL TO THE MEETING ON THE 20TH. BUT THEY WILL NOT BE FINALLY CERTAIN UNTIL THE CAST IS REMOVED FROM HIS LEG. HE WANTED GAMASY TO UNDERSTAND THAT IZOSUSLIGHT DELAY WERE REQUIRED AT THE LAST MINUTE IT WOULD HAVE NOTHING BUT MEDICAL SIGNIFI-CANCE.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 10048

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS CHEROKEE

7. WEIZMAN WILL BE EAGER TO KNOW WHETHER WE AND THE EGYPTIANS WOULD AGREE TO HIS COMING BY US AIR FORCE PLANE AND WHAT THE COMPOSITION OF HIS PARTY SHOULD BE. I HOPE THAT THESE MATTERS CAN BE CLARIFIED WITH SADAT AND GAMASY, AS WELL AS WITH WASHINGTON, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

3. PARENTHETICALLY, I SENSE A PREFERENCE IN CAIRO FOR HAVING ISRAELIS TRAVEL IN DISGUISE ON US PASSPORTS. FRANKLY, THIS IS NOT AS EASY TO ACHIEVE WITH WELL-KNOWN ISRAELIS AS THE EGYPTIANS APPARENTLY THINK IT IS. MOREOVER, IT IS NOT THE MOST PSYCHOLOGICALLY ACCEPTABLE DEVICE HERE. I HOPE THAT WE CAN AVOID THIS IDEA WHENEVER IT APPEARS ON THE HORIZON. IN WEIZMAN'S CASE, TRAVEL BY US AIR FORCE PLANE ALSO ADDS A CERTAIN AMERICAN FLAVOR TO THE ENCOUNTER WHICH MAY ALSO BE ATTRACTIVE TO SADAT; IT OBVIOUSLY IS AN ATTRACTIVE DIMENSION TO WEIZMAN AND BEGIN.

9. TEXT OF WEIZMAN'S LETTER TO GENERAL GAMASY FOLLOWS:

QUOTE:

DEAR GENERAL GAMASSI,
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 10048 02 OF 02 011520Z

I HAVE PREPARED A LETTER TO YOU DISCUSSING OUR
PLANNED MEETING, WHICH I WANTED TO SEND OVER THROUGH
THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE U.S. DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.
HOWEVER, YOUR VERY KIND INVITATION REACHED ME BEFORE
I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER MY LETTER.

PRESIDENT SADAT AND PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AGREED
THAT WE SHOULD MEET IN ORDER TO DISCUSS AND CONCLUDE
ARRANGEMENTS NECESSARY TO AVOID CLASHES BETWEEN OUR
ARMED FORCES, AND CLARIFY SUCH MILITARY PROBLEMS WHICH
ARE OF MUTUAL INTEREST TO BOTH OF THEM. AS THERE IS
NOW WHAT IS CONSIDERED TO BE A MUTUAL COMMITMENT MADE
DURING THE MOMENTOUS VISIT OF PRESIDENT SADAT TO
JERUSALEM NOT TO RESORT AGAIN TO ARMS, I WOULD CONSI-
DER IT A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU AT A TIME OF YOUR
CONVENIENCE.

MEANWHILE, I WOULD LIKE TO PUT TO YOU THE THOUGHT
WHICH, I TRUST, YOU WILL SHARE, THAT THE FORCES OF BOTH
SIDES CONDUCT THEMSELVES NOW IN KEEPING WITH THE KIND
OF AGREEMENTS WE WOULD LIKE TO CONCLUDE FOLLOWING THE
UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE
PRIME MINISTER. I HAVE ALREADY ISSUED EXPLICIT ORDERS
TO THE I.D.F. IN THIS SENSE.

I LOOK FORWARD TO MEET YOU PERSONALLY AND TO SEE
EGYPT AND ESPECIALLY CAIRO, WHICH I HAVE NOT BEEN TO
SINCE 1946, AND I HOPE ESPECIALLY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS IN
THE SPIRIT AS THAT PREVAILED DURING THE MEETINGS OF THE
TWO DELEGATIONS IN JERUSALEM, SO THAT BOTH OF US WILL BE
ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFORTS OF OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS
IN ACHIEVING PEACE.

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SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 10048 02 OF 02 011520Z

MAY I TAKE THE LIBERTY OF EXTENDING MY BEST WISHES
TO MRS. GAMASSI FOR A SPEEDY AND FULL RECOVERY.

YOURS SINCERELY, (SIGNED) EZER WEIZMAN, MINISTER OF
DEFENCE.
END QUOTE

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